

Danielle Thompson

A
REPORT
OF
THE LECTURE,

DELIVERED BY THE

REV. W. THORP,

AT THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON's CHAPEL,

ON THURSDAY, JAN. 12, 1832,

UPON

THE RIOTS OF BRISTOL.

"The Bristol rioters have been tried at the bar of their offended country, and have received sentence of death"—*Vide Lecture.*

BRISTOL:

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1832.

TO THE READER.

THE Lecture, of which the substance will be found in the following pages, was delivered at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, in this city, on Thursday evening, January the 12th inst., by the Rev. Wm. Thorp. Its connexion with those deplorable events which have given an unenviable notoriety to our city, and in which every inhabitant is deeply interested, together with the extraordinary sensation which it produced upon a very numerous auditory, has induced its publication; and as it was desirable, that it should be printed in such a form, and at such a price, as would render it available by the humbler classes of society, it has been so condensed as to obtain the desired effect; but, at the same time, no material point has been in any way abridged, and it is therefore hoped that it will contain the entire substance of the reverend gentleman's lecture.

BRISTOL, *January 17, 1832.*

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REPORT OF THE LECTURE,

&c.

THE subject of this Lecture is taken from the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the 10th and following verses.

"There is none righteous, no, not one :

"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

"Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips :

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :

"Their feet are swift to shed blood :

"Destruction and misery are in their ways :

"And the way of peace have they not known :

"There is no fear of God before their eyes.

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

IT is at the request of many of my brethren, the ministers, and of very many of my friends, that I direct your attention to this part of the Scriptures, that you may view fallen man in his true state, and observe the depravity of the human heart.

In the primeval ages every thing was beautiful, every thing was virtuous; the sense was subject to reason; the appetite to the will; and the whole earth was filled with God. This was the state of happiness, but human nature has become degenerate; the sense prevails over reason, the appetite over the will, and the love of worldly pleasure over a love of God; the whole human race is become degenerate and fallen, so that the Holy Scriptures, speaking of man in this state, says, "He is alienated from God;" "they are all gone out of the way;" "there is none righteous, no, not one." My subject does not require that I should take a review of the causes of this degeneracy, but it is sufficient to know the fact of its being so; and the evidences of ages, as well as the records of time, convince us of the truth of this statement, and the Apostle Paul has summed it up in one point :—"Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know: that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." What a humiliating picture is here delineated by the Apostle, of the moral state of depravity of the whole globe! But is there no exception to this general depravity? The Jews

fancied they were an exception, being, as they thought, righteous; but what says the Apostle? and he was, in his original nature, a Jew; and he says, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; there is none righteous, no, not one:" These expressions are collected from the Psalms and the Prophets, and how powerful is their language, "They are all gone aside," "They are altogether become filthy," for this is the original word; "they are altogether become filthy," that is stinking, abominable, wicked; "There is none that doeth good." These are the words of the Psalmist, and again he says, "His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud; under his tongue are mischief and vanity; for their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths; the way of peace they know not." These are the words of the Holy Psalmist and the Prophet Isaiah, and are evidences of what has been said, proving, according to the Apostle, that Jews and Gentiles are under one God. "Is he God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." Instead of looking for more authorities, it will be sufficient for us to consider these. The persons to whom the Apostle addressed himself, thought themselves different from others. Subjects of a mighty empire, they thought themselves free and exempt from these things. But these words are addressed unto all men, that every mouth may be stopped. Brethren, pride was the fall of Lucifer, and so it is with the whole world, for they are all guilty before God; that is, every mouth is stopped by reason, but not in fact; because (and I am sorry to relate it) there are those in this degenerate age; there are those who have dared to arraign the justice of God. Infidelity is abroad, and so it will be until the day of that great and awful inquisition, when the Great Jehovah shall appear in all the thunders of his judgment; then will the infidel and the scoffer be condemned to an eternity of punishment, without even a plea for mercy. This is the effect of our pride which we must lose, for "there is none righteous, no, not one." But let us attend to the Apostle, and his directions, and we shall find that if we class them under distinct and different heads, they will prove the moral turpitude of the human heart, and the awful state of man to be that of a guilty criminal lying under the awful sentence of condemnation.

The subject opens with these words, "There is none righteous, no, not one." And thus indeed it is with man;—all are corrupt, all are guilty, all are under the awful sentence of condemnation, and every mouth is stopped. The word *righteous* signifies *just*, and therefore appertains unto a court of justice, for there shall the judges come and the accused be brought before them, that the righteous may be cleared, and condemnation passed upon the guilty; but there is no man righteous before God. We are all guilty criminals, lying under the just sentence of condemnation. Here perhaps it may however be asked, How then is it that we read of so many righteous men; as, for instance, righteous Enoch; righteous Elisha, &c.;? But so it always will be; (society will be ever divided into two classes,—the righteous, who shall be blessed; and the guilty, who shall be condemned,) the answer being by no means difficult, because the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; thus it is written, "Blessed is the man who doeth righteous works." This doctrine was preserved by tradition in the earliest ages, in all nations; and so wonderful have been its effects, that it would have been wonderful if they could have been forgotten. Job asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one! and

what is man that he should be clean; and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous." All Job's acquaintances speak in the same terms, and again he says. "Behold I was conceived in guilt, even in my mother's womb." The universality of death proves the universal corruption of man. If all are punished, all are guilty, for all the millions upon millions who die, there is none that dieth by accident, no not one; for God careth for his creatures, and not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without his knowledge.

The second part of our subject is to prove that there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God; and this shows fully the unrighteousness of man, for none understand. Let it not be supposed that by understanding is meant the knowledge of this world, for such is not the case. It is not the knowledge of science, nor the acquaintance with the arts; it is not learning, nor trade, nor worldly honours, which is meant, but the understanding of God; and in this, there is none that understandeth, no, not one. This depravity of every thought, of every wish of the heart of man, is a sign of his wickedness, and so he has been throughout all the ages of the world. Before the deluge, the whole earth was filled by vice and iniquity, and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was filled with evil; they were all corrupt. Perhaps it would be said, But this was before the deluge; but let me ask, Are we any better? No, we are not, for the heart of man is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" the prophet Isaiah justly denounces the abominableness of man;—the adulterer, and the liar, the drunkard, and the idolater,—and proclaims that after thousands of years, the day of judgment shall come, and shall find the whole world corrupt. Thus, every thing proves that the heart of man has not understood the true God.

The idolatry that prevails over all the nations of the earth would lead us to believe that there was something of that circumstance in the first fall of man. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of this when he says, "Surely all men are altogether brutish and foolish; the stock is a doctrine of vanities." The way of idolatry is expressly called, "the way of all nations," and would have been followed by the children of Abraham, had it not been wisely restrained. That the Gentiles before the preaching of the gospel were alienated from God, and that the Jews were falling into the same track, are facts so well known, as to need no comment, and proves this part of our question. Idolatry, I lament to say, is not confined to the heathen, it is prevalent in this kingdom—in this city—this neighbourhood—and in this very chapel. Every one who has a something in his heart, which is the ruling object of his love, and which is not God, is as much an idolater as the heathen who bows himself down in the worship of images of senseless stocks and stones; it is as much idolatry; it is a Moloch—a Baal—a monster of the most horrid kind. I am unwilling to mention the profane rights by which these idols are worshipped; it is unnecessary that I should; it is unnecessary that I should call your attention to the scenes of riot and outrage, robbery, bloodshed, and conflagration, which have lately taken place in our city; nor need I lead you into the haunts of vice, the home of adultery, or the abode of crime. It is sufficient to establish the charge of idolatry against us, if our affections are not placed on God. The lover of pleasure is an idolater, and his idolatry is the fondness of the luxuries of this earth. The votary of ambition is an idolater, and his idol is worldly honour. The drunkard is an idolater, and his idol is wine. All are idolaters; and it matters not, whether it consists of the love of worldly honour, the trickery of trade, or the chicanery of the law—it is as much idolatry as the worship of Moloch,

or of a graven image—it is the idolatry of the heart. And this ignorance of the understanding is further aggravated by the wickedness of man; “there is none that seeketh after God, no, not one.” The cares of this world occupy all the thoughts of our hearts; the necessities of food and raiment, the pursuit of trade, the love of pleasure, the ambition to obtain worldly honour, &c., occupy us so much, that God is forgotten. Tell a man how to obtain the object of his ambition, how to drive a bargain, how to obtain pleasure, how to carry on a prosperous trade, or any other worldly pursuit, and he can hear you, he is all attention; but talk to him of God, and he is pre-engaged; “Go thy ways,” says he, “I will hear thee at a more convenient season.” This shews man’s worldly love. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” The apostle declares that even the Gentiles are without excuse; then how much more so, are we? Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, will be revealed in the day of judgment, in all the glory of his majesty, and the wicked will be punished for ever. It is a sufficient proof of the depravity of man’s heart, that we prefer our own ways to those of God. He formed us to be happy, but we are prone to evil; the faculties of our mind are darkened; our mouths are full of deceit; sin hath deprived us of the knowledge of God; and the consequence is, that we are all gone out of the way; for there is only one right way, but there are a thousand ways of being wrong. If we are not following the way which he says is the right way, we are far from God; and the profane swearer, the self-righteous, the votary of ambition, and the lover of gold, and of pleasure, will all be left, unless God, in his mercy, may pardon them; they will be left in a state of hopeless, irremediable ruin; they are all under condemnation, they are all guilty before God. It is grievous to a spiritual mind, to think of the state of man; but, my brethren, whatever may be your character among men, if you do not truly repent, you are in the way to eternal condemnation. The word of God is the unerring rule of faith, and the standard by which we must be judged, and unless a man believes in this, he shall certainly be damned. “What benefit,” asks the apostle, “can they possibly reap from their own perdition?” for “the wages of sin is death,” and unless they truly repent, they shall be cast into the pit of everlasting darkness, “where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

Man is become unprofitable, “there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “How abominable,” says the prophet, “is the man who drinketh of the filthy water.” If the fountain be dirty, the streams needs must be polluted. The word of God makes these things as plain as if they were demonstrated by human analogy. Let us, for example, enter the chamber of death, and view the corpse of one we loved! How different are they to when we last beheld them! All then was living, now they are sunk into the silence of death; the eyes which were formed for seeing, are now closed for ever; the ears can no longer perform their office; the tongue will no more gladden us with its sounds; the limbs, so admirably made for motion, are now stiffened by the cold embrace of death; the heart which used to throb unceasingly, is stopped, no more to beat; the blood has forsaken the veins; the hands and feet are torpid and benumbed; the intellect has become extinct; the lungs have ceased to play; and the whole frame is hastening to corruption, putridity, and dust; and thus it is the apostle speaks of fallen man. The analogy is perfect, for, if righteousness is eternal life, then is depravity, putrid death. The natural man is dead, for he pursues the lust of the eye and the flesh; and every idolatry, the further you pursue the analogy, the more perfect it is. Can the dead man open his eyes—hear with his ears—move with his limbs, or perform

any natural function? No! and thus it is with the spiritual man, if the inner man be dead, beautiful may be the outside, but within it is full of dead men's bones and rottenness. Thus men are dead, while they seem to live—walking sepulchres full of corruption. From the turpitude of man's heart, the apostle proceeds to his deceit and lying; their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. And thus it is with man: he is full of deceit, he does not hesitate to state two different accounts of the same occurrence, and the pen is as bad as the tongue. As an example, witness the infamous things which daily issue from the press; exaggeration, scandal, lies, defamation, and every thing which is vile; people who know the world are sure of this, and the press serves to deceive only those who look alone to the surface of things. How many characters have been blasted, how many families have been ruined by the infamous accounts put forth by the press. Man is full of lies. How talkative would many be, if their conversations were divested of scandal? So prone is man to lying, that children continue it in spite of precept upon precept, and admonition upon admonition. To their lying and deceit, other things arise; for to falsehood they add cursing and slander, and become common liars, swearers, blasphemers, and guilty of every vice; and how many are there in this city, in the lower, the middle, and the upper classes, who defy the vengeance of their God, that God whom angels have adored, and devils trembled at his name;—and what can it avail them, for they are all guilty before God.

From their words we proceed to their actions:—"Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." Here I confess, brethren, that I am confounded, appalled, and overwhelmed, with this part of my subject. Can fallen man be thus? is he so base? is he so abominable? If we review the facts, we shall find that he is. Witness the first murder, and that, too, of a brother. Infidelity, idolatry, and crime, will always be the same. Witness the murder of the Prophets, and of our blessed Saviour, who died for sinful man. Witness the murders of Julius. They are, indeed, quick to shed blood, aye, even for a shadow:—for the honour of man, who has no honour: and this false honour cannot be satisfied, except by blood. There are times, says Mr. Locke, when whole nations run mad for blood. Witness the civil wars we have beheld in this and other countries—the desolation they have caused—the cruelties they have committed. Witness the wars of the Jews. Witness the first French Revolution, where men became tigers, and the guillotine and the prisons reeked with blood; where, within the short space of six years, upwards of three millions of men's lives were sacrificed upon the altars of infidelity and atheism. And if infidelity and atheism should prevail, ah! what blood, what crime, may follow! and is there no fear that such things may come to pass? There is: for infidelity and atheism are upon the advance; it being proved that, within the last year, upwards of one million copies of infidel works, by Voltaire and others, have been circulated in France; while it has only been possible to introduce one hundred thousand bibles to counteract their noxious influence. Witness the horrid scenes lately acted in this city. Who were the actors? Your fellow-citizens—your next door neighbours;—men, indeed, lost to every moral feeling, and led to commit every species of riot, outrage, and bloodshed; taking advantage of a moment of political excitement—taking advantage of the state of agitation in which the city was placed—reckless of the consequences of their acts, they brought riot, outrage, fire, plunder, and the sword, within our city.—Witness

the wars of nations :—and say if man is not the greatest enemy of man. Witness the blood which has been shed from the times of Nimrod. Could all this blood, down to the last war with the Poles, be brought into one place, and weighed and measured, and placed before the sight, how immense would be its quantity, and how horrific would be the scene. Pass on, and observe the wilful contumacy of man :—“There is no fear of God before their eyes;” they go on, reckless of consequences; they rebel against their God, and have no sense of their danger. Instead of turning the right way, man’s heart, like those of the Bristol rioters, is fixed upon the gratification of his own passions, and he rushes on destruction.

Finally, observe his awful state as a guilty criminal, under sentence of condemnation. “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” The law of God is spiritual, and its principles extend to the spirit as well as to the outward man. Arrayed in awful majesty, it takes its awful stand upon Mount Sinai; and terrible is his awful word, when he proclaims to fallen man—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” The whole of this has been exemplified in the conduct of the late rioters. They are perfectly unrighteous. The God of their idolatry is of this world; “they are full of deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; destruction and misery are in their ways, the way of peace have they not known; they have been swift to shed blood, and the fear of God was not before their eyes.” They are now convicted at the bar of their offended country, and have received sentence of death; but what is worse, they are guilty before God; they are under the sentence of eternal condemnation. This is their awful state. Do not forget your own. Forget not your own hearts; you are guilty before God. Here we may trace drunkenness, adultery, fornication, falsehood, slander, blasphemy, and every crime. Here we may trace the avarice which has searched the bowels of the earth; the ambition which has founded thrones, and cemented empires; the cruelty which has caused bloodshed and martyrdom; and the infidelity and atheism, which have denied the justice of the Most High, and defied his vengeance. These are, however, the mere outbreaks—the mere shadows of corruption; and if these are so dreadful—if these are so awful;—if when bound by the ties of the law, restrained by family connexions and the dread of shame, (for even the infidel and the atheist tremble at the Saviour’s wrath,) we are so depraved; if we were released from constraint, and could behold ourselves in all the hideousness of sin, we should start back aghast, exclaiming, This is the portrait of a fiend and not of man.

It is true that men were miserable, and thus were fit objects of Divine mercy; but it is plain that there could be no moral necessity of man’s being saved; for if there was, why were the fallen angels cast into utter condemnation. Let us therefore look to ourselves, and we must acknowledge that we are justly condemned to perish, but that we cast ourselves upon the mercy of God. If St. Paul’s character is correct, and we have traced it by facts, as we also find it is by the most eminent of men, Job, who says, I am unclean—Isaiah, St. Paul, David, Luther, Calvin, St. Augustin, President Edwards—men far above the common race of man in piety, walking with God,—see how they cry out, Mercy, O God—Mercy, O Lord God. Holy Bradford, a man most virtuous, one of the most devout persons who suffered martyrdom in this country in the days of persecution—a man who was so eminent for his piety as to obtain the name

of holy—he was so convinced of the state of man—he was so certain of his depravity, and of the moral turpitude of his heart, that whenever he saw a malefactor going by to execution, he used to exclaim, There goes John Bradford, but for God's grace.

You have seen the conduct and character of the late rioters. They are condemned to death. See in their guilt your own hearts. Behold you are condemned to death as well as they. Never let your mouths be again opened to murmur, but to cry aloud for mercy; for the whole world is guilty before God. Because we were destitute of all righteousness, it was that God took upon him the form of a man—was conceived of a virgin; for our wickedness was his brow crowned with thorns, reminding us of the thorn in the flesh; for us was he executed upon a tree, even the tree of the cross, to remind us of the first fall of man through eating the forbidden fruit; for us did he endure the agony and bloody sweat, in order, by his sufferings, to cleanse us from our sins; for us did he undergo the bitterness of death, proving our eternal condemnation by the law, and that we are all guilty before God. For our sakes were his hands and feet pierced with nails; and they gave him to drink of the bitter cup, that the bitterness of sin might be exemplified; and God turned from him at the last moment, because he would shew us that we were turned from God,—crying in the extremity of his anguish, with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Thus was our iniquity laid upon him, by the justest mode of retribution; thus the image of the old Adam was destroyed in the image of the new Adam; thus was there a new foundation. This was the atonement for man's sins, (that, though he was dead by the law, yet might he be saved through grace.) He passed and was justified; he became no longer a moving sepulchre, but a living temple; he was accepted and glorified: and this is what the Apostle means, when he says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."

Let us then review these things, and then behold his atonement: "Behold I bring glad tidings of great joy." Are your sins as scarlet? "they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Despair be banished from this place:—a door is opened for sinners to be saved, and oh! how does it exalt us; it raises the poor and the destitute, that he may sit on the throne with princes; and he who was an alien and an outcast becomes a fellow citizen with his blessed Saviour:—the glorified spirit cries out, it was grace that wrote my name in that book—it was grace that made me repent. "Not unto us, but unto thee, oh! God, be all the praise."

To conclude.—If, as Mr. Locke says, there are times when whole nations run mad, have we not reason to fear such times are at hand? We have indeed. We live in perilous times. Infidelity and atheism are making rapid strides; the depravity of man's heart is increased; the whole of Europe is a magazine of combustion, it needs but a spark of gunpowder to cause one vast and universal explosion. Of this, you have lately had an awful example in your own city; the magazine was made, the train was laid, every thing was prepared, *the entrance of the learned Recorder, to perform the high judicial functions with which he was invested, was only the spark; the train was enflamed, and awful was the explosion.* LET THE SINNER THEREFORE BETAKE HIMSELF UNTO HIS GOD; THE STORM IS HANGING OVER HEAD, THE BOLT IS READY TO CRUSH YOU; OH, THEN LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET: "FLEE FROM THE WRATH THAT IS TO COME."

LET US THEN, IN THESE PERILOUS TIMES; LET ALL WHO LOVE THEIR KING, THEIR COUNTRY, AND THEIR GOD; LET ALL WHO LOVE ORDER, AND WHO WISH TO PRESERVE THE PUBLIC PEACE, ABSTAIN FROM DOING ANY THING TO EXCITE THE MINDS, OR INCREASE THE AGITATION OF ANY, BUT ESPECIALLY, OF THE LOWER ORDERS.

All political parties should firmly unite in the support of the Government in this momentous crisis. Let us also seek earnestly after God, for all the world is guilty before God; but if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed; then shall he be saved by grace; —he shall surely live.

THE chapel was excessively crowded, and the reverend gentleman's oration, which was delivered in the most solemn and impressive manner, was listened to by the almost electrified audience with the most profound attention. It would be superfluous to remark upon the talents of the lecturer—they are two well known in Bristol to need any eulogium, but it may not be out of place to say, that, although we have many times listened to him with the utmost delight, the repeated bursts of eloquence and the depth of feeling displayed in the course of the present lecture, exceeded, in our estimation, any of the reverend gentleman's previous efforts.